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The Social Value of a Code of Ethics for Journalists

By ERIC W. ALLEN

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RECENT criticisms of the American newspaper, sweeping and condemnatory, of which Mr. Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check* may be taken as the extremest example, ignore so many factors in the social problem of the press, in its past, in its present, and in its future, that the final result is much heat without any appreciable light.

Yet the questions Mr. Sinclair attempted to raise, and failed to raise in any effective way in the mind of the profession because of the intemperance of his methods, are important ones and worthy of study. An educated and idealistic newspaper writer, employed by one of the leading New York dailies, suggested to the writer that Mr. Sinclair's book was important enough to deserve—what? Not confutation, but rewriting by some careful, independent, trained investigator, who could work without excitement, who would accurately define all his terms, and guard and support every generalization with adequate documentation. For it is the generalizations in the book that are important if true, and in so far as they are true.

Fresh from a rereading of Mr. Sinclair's eloquent Philippic it was the privilege of the writer to serve as host to a hundred responsible newspaper editors, most of them newspaper owners, representing very nearly all the larger papers of one of the western states. They had travelled, some of them, hundreds of miles to be present at a two-day session at the School of Journalism of their state university for the discussion of newspaper problems. Nor had these discussions to do principally with advertising rates, wire serv-

ice, charges for job printing, or wages. The point of most intense and general interest in the conference was the adoption of a code of ethics for journalism which has since been described by the *Editor and Publisher* of New York, a leading professional magazine, as striking "the highest note that has been sounded in American journalism." This code was passed unanimously, and a subsidiary motion was passed that it should be given fullest publicity in order that the public may "check us up if we fail to observe it."

SALVATION OF THE PRESS WITH ITS OWN PERSONNEL

The writer sat where he could see the faces of these men; their records, their successes and their failures he had observed for years; he knew the spark of genius here and perhaps the mental limitation there. With many he had been asked to consult in times of personal crisis and honest doubt. Then came to his mind the picture of a debased press, so fervently presented by the college professors, the sociologists, the free lances, of whom Mr. Sinclair is only one,¹—the picture of slavish repression, malicious carelessness, conceited ignorance, and contented corruption—and the thought came to him that the salvation of the Ameri-

¹ No slur is intended upon the report of the Interchurch World Movement on conditions in Pittsburgh. This document is of a different type and calls for a reasoned answer from those who feel aggrieved; clamorous counter-propaganda and charges of sedition are aside from the point. The reaction of the press itself to the report is shown on pp. 311 and 312 of *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike*. Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1921.

can press is with these editors more than it is with those critics; that the critical picture is overdrawn and lacks perspective and proportion.

The most virulent critics of the press as it exists do not deny the presence in the working personnel of the profession of a tremendous element of good will, character, technical knowledge, and aspiration for social improvement. The most satisfied of the newspaper's defenders—and there are many who point with pride to the contrast its present condition makes with its often erring past—cannot overlook the imperfections of the present and the need for vigilant care lest progress slacken and retrogression or decay set in. He would be an incurable optimist or a careless observer who would say that the morale of the press has not received grave wounds in the period of the War and Armistice. Yet even since 1914 certain constructive changes have been initiated within the body of the profession itself that may ultimately far outweigh in effect the degenerative influences of the orgy of hatred, narrowness and propaganda. Some of these will be specified later.

The modern press, as we know it, is less than a hundred years old. Three generations, in this country at least, have witnessed nearly the whole of the evolution of the journalist, the man who regards the gathering, presentation and interpretation of the news of the world as a science and an art, and its practice as a profession. Before, say, 1830 we have in journalism only the psychology of the pamphleteer and the politician applied through one of the collateral activities of the job printer. Even today a careless apprentice system furnishes nearly all the training for what must become, in any really well-ordered system of society, one of the most learned and scrupulous of the higher professions.

The problems of journalism can never be disconnected from the dilemmas that confront society as a whole and every newspaper office decision arises in some way from and has a reactive effect upon economic and social forces that play upon the community at large. In a perfect society good journalism would be easy. Yet he who proposes to reform society as a necessary precedent to developing a better journalism is lost to all sense of proportion; the very function of good journalism is to work toward a better society; the newspaper is to be justified as an instrument and not as an end. To wait for society to demand better newspapers is to wait too long; besides, there are more signs of hope within the profession itself than are yet to be observed in the effective demand of newspaper patrons, subscribers and advertisers—society.

NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS OF TODAY

The newspaper publishers of today are men of varied origins and training. Many began their careers as printers; others inherited or invested in newspaper properties. The advertising solicitor, the circulation man, the newsboy, the office boy, the printer's devil, have developed into controllers of policy as frequently as the man who served his apprenticeship, such as it was, in the gathering and writing of news. An acute business judgment is a more uniform characteristic than any familiarity with the social effects of journalistic policies. Yet it is this personnel that is the strongest force behind the effort to raise journalism to a position as one of the learned and scrupulous professions. It is these men who are the backers of the new schools of journalism and it is they who encourage the teachers of journalism to criticise freely, to set up such ideals as they are capable of conceiving and

presenting, to face the facts of the situation and to seek ethical solutions. The sons of such men form a large portion of the student bodies of the better schools of journalism which have been established in the last dozen years.

These, too, are the men who, in many of the western states, gather year after year in their state universities in ever increasing numbers to discuss professional problems with each other and with the faculties and students of the schools of journalism. It was such a body of men that adopted the Kansas Newspaper Code in 1910, and such a body that decided to make clear to the public a rather definite statement of their professional practices in Oregon in 1922.

It is becoming old-fashioned in such meetings to deny that there is room for further progress in journalism, or that study of newspaper problems may be of some effect. The old tendency to resent and sweepingly repudiate anything said in criticism of the press is disappearing from the newspapers themselves. The old-time editor not only did this but did it in such a way as deeply to wound the spirit or reputation of the person who dared to criticise.

SOCIAL NEED FOR A CLARIFIED CODE

The old theory—for public consumption—was that all newspaper men, without taking thought, naturally from the first day of their careers mystically knew all the ethical implications of their acts.

"The very fact that it becomes necessary to publish a definite code of the ideals to which *most journalists have subscribed from the day they entered the profession*," says Henry Ford's *Dear-born Independent*, "is proof that somewhere all is not as it should be." The

premise and the conclusion of this reasoning both seem to be that perfection has not yet been obtained; which is correct, but the italicized words picture a miracle that has not happened.

The *New York Times*, in the more light-hearted of its editorial columns—"Topics of the Times"—takes much the same stand, narrowing the accusation down to the Oregonians whose adoption of a code calling for papers to be conducted, says the *Times*, "as reputable papers have always been" is characterized—light-heartedly—as a confession of past wickedness. Light-hearted, too, was the *Times* in violating three or four sections of the code by stating out of its own inner and incorrect knowledge that the Oregon document was not written "by a newspaper man or even a journalist."

The written code is an instrument of education. It is not a confession of wickedness nor is there anything light-hearted about it. Its function is to make clear not only to the university trained neophyte but to the untrained man in the profession, to the critical public and to the publisher himself the premises and the type of reasoning upon which newspaper decisions must be based and upon which erroneous decisions are rightly to be criticised.

The reasons behind newspaper decisions are not, upon the whole, well understood by the public. Many a conscientious act, public spirited in its intent, is interpreted as wanton cruelty or sordid sensationalism, or attributed to commercial motives. On the other hand, many a publisher utterly mistakes what the public interest really demands, or even acts upon incentives which he regards as legitimate but which sound principles of journalistic ethics should forbid.

If any body of thought ever demanded clarification, systematization,

and logical analysis, it is that of the ethics of journalism. The "codes" so far formulated, are only a basis—a sound basis, it is to be hoped—for much further study and discussion, leading finally to treatises, much more complete, upon the actual practices accepted by the profession.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS OF THE WORKING JOURNALIST

A few problems, easy perhaps to closet philosophers, but still extremely puzzling to the working journalist, may be cited to demonstrate the need of ethical study and teaching.

What is the highest duty of the press in time of war—a great war, believed to be a righteous war, a war dangerous to the very existence of the nation? "Tell the unvarnished truth as I see it," replies one, and if he sees the truth in unpopular aspects he loses his paper and perhaps his liberty. "Anything to help win the war," says another extremist. Most editors in the last few years have stood on middle ground, some toward one limit and some toward the other, leaving the public confused as to what to believe in the papers, and more than ever inclined to doubt the integrity of the press.

The Oregon Code, like all the journalistic codes published to this time, is emphatic throughout in its emphasis upon the importance of telling all the truth; yet the qualification enters inconspicuously in various connections that "if the public or social interest demands"—decidedly not the personal or commercial interest of the publisher or editor—suppression is allowable.

What does this mean?

What does it mean in case of a second-rate war, or a third-rate war with Haiti or Santo Domingo? What does it mean in such a struggle as that in the northwest in which the Non-

Partisan League is involved? Or when communism threatens what most editors consider the social and public interest? Even the struggle between parties, far less bitter than of old, may still supply honest editors with doubts. The editor's conception of the "public or social interest" is an element that it seems dangerous to leave in the code or to take out. Is it, after all, or will it in time become, his duty to tell the truth though the heavens, in his judgment, will fall?

A code must not legislate. There is no organized body in journalism that has sufficient prestige to speak for the profession or greatly to influence its practices. Yet newspapers vary from the honest and courageous to the supine, and a code can set as a minimum the best practices of the profession, and as the optimum the state of perfect knowledge, perfect good will and perfect courage. And in both its aspects, the disowning of inferior practices and the setting up of an ideal, the code can become a constructive influence in the profession.

The editor's belief as to what constitutes "public and social interest" can be affected only by the gradual moralization and rationalization of all society, by education of the young newspapermen and by logical criticism. For his informed judgment no written rule can be substituted. But more truth and much less concern with immediate results seems to be the path of progress.

If a code could legislate, there is one problem of modern journalism, greatly intensified since the War, upon which a code maker would be tempted to try his hand. It is serious enough, perhaps, to attract the interest of the state, but there is little probability that any existing legislative body would adopt sound views upon the subject. It is that of propaganda.

THE DAY OF THE "PROMOTION" AGENT

The despised "press agent" of an earlier day has developed first into the "publicity man" and then into the "promotion" expert. Now he often bears a still more dignified title. He is, perhaps, in a large corporation a fourth vice-president; in politics he is paid with tax money as "secretary" to this or that official or "assistant secretary" in some department; he thrives independently as an "agency"; in large organizations he often multiplies into a department; in some scores of universities he is camouflaged as "president's secretary" or as "professor of journalism," with duties to practice the lower functions of the profession rather than to teach the higher. His name is Legion. He was formerly a newspaper man, and a good one. He left the profession for a higher salary than he was earning as reporter or copy editor. The increasing power and prestige of the "promotion" industry helps to anesthetize the wound to his professional conscience and pride. As a trained newspaper man he needed no written code to tell him that it was wrong to sell his pen and to write news for the public under the censorship of a private interest.

He is a real problem; scolding will not eliminate him. He is respectable. After a course in sophistry, necessitated by his self-esteem, he comes to regard himself as ethical, and his own careful statement of his functions exhibits him as a useful member of society. He worked for the government and helped win the War. Newspapers reject the great bulk of his copy, but apparently they accept enough of it to justify his existence economically.

No section of the Oregon Code has aroused so much discussion as the following sentence:

We will not permit, unless in exceptional cases, the publishing of news and editorial matter not prepared by ourselves or our staffs, believing that original matter is the best answer to the peril of propaganda.

Without the saving clause "exceptional cases," this rule would be as futile as King Canute sweeping back the tide. A great many cases are "exceptional" to this rule in average newspaper practice the country over. Not only is much of the most able and most highly paid journalistic talent of the country working today on these "exceptional cases" for private interests but the newsystem, that has grown so great since the War demonstrated the efficacy of organized propaganda, has obtained nearly exclusive control of much of the most important news matter, and has nearly shut out the professional journalist from many of its sources.

No more than any other tradesman does the promotion agent live by his vices. He is strong because of his virtues. The news he writes he writes well. He is well trained; he has every reason for exercising great care in his work. He has sympathetic access to the prime movers in the events he records; he fortifies himself by reference to documents; he has greater leisure than the reporter and often devotes it to a sound study of his specialty. His employers value his work because it is more accurate, fairer (especially to them) than the articles that used to appear as the result of their verbal interviews with reporters, and because his articles, after they are written, can be examined and perfected before publication.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROMOTION SYSTEM

Therefore the powerful men of the community prefer to speak through their promotion agents and, as a corollary, no longer submit with the

old freedom to the interviewing of the journalist. "There is my prepared statement; I have nothing more to add. If you have further questions to ask, leave them in writing and we will supply you with a supplementary article."

The social implications of this new system are serious in the extreme. The professional journalist is cut off from much of the most important and difficult work of his profession. He loses the stimulus that comes from the necessity of careful research in dealing with the more complicated sort of news. He has lost this important function partly because he did not learn to do it well, because he often preferred "features" to facts, because he sometimes wanted only a "good story," careless of the consequences to those most concerned, because he so frequently left the person who submitted to his questioning in a state of anxious and fully justified doubt as to the use that was to be made of his words.

But only partly. Powerful individuals never like to be cross examined, and now they have largely exempted themselves from the questioning minds of the reporters who, with all their faults, represented the point of view and, as best they could, the interests of the public. Much that happens in these days is presented to the public in the words of the actors or their satellites, without evaluation through the mind of the professional journalist.

Whole sections devoted to the automobile industry, columns of theatrical "notes" and even "criticism," book "reviews," much industrial, financial and real estate "news," college and university items, stories of organized uplift movements, and a considerable body of political and administrative news from governmental centers are furnished to the press in the form of publicity "handouts." Papers use

varying amounts, some very little; some freely. All is more or less biased by private interest.

THE BUSINESS OF A WRITTEN CODE

The publication of a written code brings such questions as this to the forefront of discussion. They become more likely to receive thoughtful consideration. Perhaps the answer to this one—the problem of propaganda—will not be the elimination of the promotion agent; perhaps the best immediate step will be a practice of plainly labeling all such matter with its origin and the character of its authorship; it would seem that fairness to the public could scarcely do less.

Economic laws are behind most of the tendencies of present day journalism. The public is not willing to pay the newspaper for studious and unbiased and laborious researches into public and business questions while the private interests concerned *are* willing to relieve the newspapers of this expense for the apparently trifling privilege of editing the copy from their own point of view.

Police news and scandal, again, are cheap and easy to get. The officers of the law and the courts, paid by the state, assume most of the expense of gathering the facts. A single reporter, stationed at a strategic point, can collect columns of readable news of this kind in a single day, while the economic reporter engaged on an industrial item might require greater ability and training and yet have to work weeks upon a single article. The tendency, therefore, can scarcely be ignored to let industry and government assume the burden of the more expensive investigations, while the reporter employed by the newspaper concentrates upon the most productive matter—the cheap stuff.

If the public can be educated—and

it can—to like the latter (routine superficial sensationalism) and to accept the former (news requiring research) in its new predigested form together with the little pinch of poison the press agent inserts, we have the beau ideal of gutter journalism.

The business of a written code is to point out to all concerned that there are deep social reasons why such tendencies must be resisted. Beyond the making clear of causes and results, ethics, as a science, does not go. From that point good will and clean intent must take hold; if these do not exist society is in a parlous state.

THE OREGON CODE

The Oregon Code, reprinted on page 283, was written in acute awareness of the actual conditions existing in the profession. It is complete only in the sense that the author of the code was conscious and deliberate in what he was leaving out as well as in respect to what he was putting in. Intra-professional relations are not treated at all; the code studies only the relation of the newspaper to society. What freedom of action an owner owes to an editor or an editor to a subordinate; to what extent the business office may advise the professional departments, and what attitude the latter may assume toward the business problems of the publication are entered into not at all. The Oregon Code is addressed to the responsible controlling power in the newspaper office; whoever may be in control, in general or in a particular matter, these are the principles he should follow.

PROPOSAL AND ADOPTION

To an unusual degree, also, the Oregon Code is, in its own state, a declaration by, as well as for, the controlling element in journalism. The adoption of the code was decided upon

by the Oregon State Editorial Association in its annual session at Bend, Oregon, in July, 1921. This body is composed almost entirely of the owners of smaller newspapers, most of them weeklies or county seat dailies. The proposal was presented to this body by C. V. Dymont, a newspaper man of many years' experience, who in 1913 became a professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Oregon, and who has lately, in addition to his duties in the professional school, become Dean of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts. The Convention commissioned Mr. Dymont, who was the representative of the School of Journalism at the meeting, to take charge of drawing up a code which should lay the emphasis not upon such matters as the maintenance of rates, etc., but upon the ethical relation of the newspaper to the public. He was instructed to report at the winter meeting of the Oregon Newspaper Conference at the School of Journalism at Eugene, a larger body which includes besides the membership of the State Editorial Association strong representation from the state metropolitan papers.

Mr. Dymont first laid his code before the faculty of the School of Journalism, and then before the annual Conference which, as it happened, was the most representative body of newspaper men, both employers and employes, that had ever assembled in Oregon. All the Portland dailies were represented, nearly all the dailies in the state, an unusually large proportion of the weeklies, and a good scattering of the trade and class journals. In most instances the papers were represented by their controlling authorities in person.

CHARACTER OF THE CODE

The strength and the weakness of the Oregon Code can be expressed in the

same sentence: It consists in a declaration of principles upon which virtually all experienced and conscientious newspaper men say they agree. It is chary of either prescribing or condemning concrete practices. Under this code practices will differ, for editors will apply these principles differently.

This can be illustrated from Section III, of the Code, "Justice, Mercy, Kindliness" (page 284). Here Rules 11, 12, 14 and 15 will in actual office practice come into conflict almost daily with Rule 13. Rule 13 means that the friend must be treated with the same cruelty with which the friendless stranger is treated; that the eminent citizen and wealthy advertiser has no more right to privacy for his misdeeds than the resourceless stranger within the gates; that the tortured applicant who comes in person to beg the editor's mercy may not have it unless the paper policy is equally merciful to all. Or, to put it conversely, the stranger is entitled to the same kindliness and mercy as the friend, the poor as the influential.

Such a code as this, setting forth principles rather than practices, can scarcely be "enforced" in American journalism as at present organized. However, it is expected by the State Editorial Association to have some "teeth" and possibly to effect some changes in the profession. In the first place, the public is taken into the confidence of the papers. The School of Journalism, by request, has printed conspicuous wall cards in two colors, two feet by three, in which form the code will be displayed in the various newspaper offices where the public and any complaining members of the public may see it. The State Editorial Association, also, has had stereotype plates made which are being sent to each paper in the state to make practicable the publication of the code in full by all the papers. Many of the papers

in the larger cities printed the code without waiting for this assistance.

APPLICATION OF ITS PRINCIPLES

The first section of the code, "Sincerity; Truth" (page 284), disowns all sophistries, and, in effect, pledges the paper that prints the code or displays it in the office to an observance of its principles. It "interprets accuracy not merely as the absence of actual misstatement, but as the presence of whatever is necessary to prevent the reader from making a false deduction." It also accepts the duty of openly acknowledging error. The reluctance of newspapers to retract erroneous statements and opinions in any wholehearted way has an interesting history reaching back to some not ignoble English precedents of a hundred years ago, but under American laws and conditions today, remedy through the court is not adequate, and refusal to make a willing and wholehearted retraction is often only stubborn meanness. This the Oregon editors disown.

CARE; COMPETENCY; THOROUGHNESS

Section II, "Care; Competency; Thoroughness" (page 284), has more in it than appears at first sight. It is, in a way, a mandate from the press to the Oregon School of Journalism to regard journalism "as a learned profession." This is not the way his vocation is regarded by many a reporter today, as anyone familiar with the American press well knows. Little midnight oil is burned in the study of the arts and sciences, or the fundamentals of sociology, economics, politics or religion by many reporters. Unlike the young ambitious lawyer or doctor, the reporter does not usually believe that success in his profession depends upon any intellectual effort aside from performing the tasks of the day; with the result that in many

instances he does not attain a high degree of competency—or reward, for that matter. What university instruction and guidance in this respect can accomplish, the next twenty years will tell.

MODERATION; CONSERVATISM; PROPORTION

Section IV, "Moderation; Conservatism; Proportion" (page 285), is expressed in general terms, but it is not so moderate or conservative as it looks. Its meaning is clear. It declares against a certain type of newspaper well known especially in the larger cities of the country. It is hard to see how a typical "tabloid illustrated," or a street sale thriller, issuing a new edition every fifteen minutes with the latest item shouting down the more important news of half an hour before, could live under this rule. One Oregon newspaper, with admirable honesty and straightforwardness, entered a "reservation" against those parts of the code which might be understood to militate against efforts at direct leadership and the emotional concentration of public attention upon even minor evils until they are corrected. The case for the more fanatical sorts of journalism is, in fact, arguable if the paper is sound at heart and incorruptible and is actuated by a sound principle; but the Oregon editors have definitely declared for a more philosophical and proportioned presentation of news and opinion. As a matter of fact, Oregon is a state characterized by an almost entire absence of sensational journalism; and it is not greatly the loser by this fact.

PARTISANSHIP AND PROPAGANDA

Section V is devoted to "Partisanship; Propaganda" (page 285). Small countries like England and France, with dozens or scores of papers printed in a centrally located metropolis and

equally accessible throughout the country on the day of publication or the next morning, can afford a partisan press or special papers adapted to various social groups or classes. Such an arrangement has certain advantages of its own. But in America geography decrees that two or three papers must serve the entire population of a given area, rich and poor, ignorant and educated, Democrat and Republican, coarse and refined, conservative and radical. The American journal therefore is too much like a public service corporation to make partisanship, in the news at least, permissible. It is the American newspaper that has developed the "non-editorial" method of telling news facts, and which is struggling toward an unpartisan way of selecting news and governing emphasis—a much more difficult matter. It is for this attempt that the Oregon papers have declared themselves. As for propaganda, it is a snake that must somehow or other be scotched, or it will choke out much of the best opportunity in the profession.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Section VI, "Public Service and Social Policy" (page 285), does not deny that the determination of "what the public wants" is and ever will be one of the great and puzzling problems of the journalist, but it does deny that the gratification of the public's whims is the foundation or only principle of journalism or that the newspaper editor is a mere merchant of information and entertainment. The public must have the facts; it must not be fooled or enticed to what the editor regards as right action; it must receive no prettier picture of the world than the facts justify; it is entitled to receive from the newspaper the factual basis on which it may, if it will, form opinions different from those of the editor, but the rules

of decency and good taste are not abrogated. It is just as well, however, that this rule is not capable of explicit statement; papers ought to continue to differ as to what "social policy" prohibits and as to what complete frankness demands.

ADVERTISING AND CIRCULATION

Section VII, "Advertising and Circulation" (page 286), does not adopt the policy widely advertised by some Eastern publications of guaranteeing every statement made and every article offered in the advertising pages. Such a rule implies vast facilities for investigation. It does promise, however, that all matter will be barred which the publisher believes harmful or intended to deceive.

A recent questionnaire sent out by the School of Journalism revealed that a considerable number of Oregon publishers are already excluding from their advertising pages considerable classes of copy. Some accept no oil or mining promotion schemes except where production is already established; some, nothing speculative; some bar all

medicines to be taken internally; some exclude cigarettes and one or two, all forms of tobacco. Many stated that they took no advertising which they believed fraudulent or harmful—the rule since enacted into the code. These facts illustrate some of the difficulties that await the future author of a code which shall be explicit as to practices and which will not, like the Oregon Code, rest content with principles. There are mining and oil prospects which by reason of their location and management are good speculative investments; there are some internal remedies which—while they may work evil by postponing the needed visit to the doctor—are useful and harmless; and many think tobacco is one of the blessings bestowed upon man by a kindly Providence.

But conscience is alive in the newspaper profession; the writer knows many, many newspapers which sacrifice and have sacrificed profits to principle; and the establishment of a code is a step in the already active mobilization of the constructive ethical forces in journalism.

The Practice of the Kansas Code of Ethics for Newspapers

By ALFRED G. HILL

Lawrence, Kansas, sometime reporter on certain Kansas daily papers and on the Public Ledger of Philadelphia

THE "Code of Ethics for Newspapers" was adopted by the Kansas Editorial Association March 8, 1910, thus making it one of the earliest, if not the earliest code of its kind adopted by a state association. The Code was largely the individual work of the late W. E. Miller, a country editor living at St. Marys, Kansas. It represented years of thought and

much work on the part of Mr. Miller, whose interest continued until his death two years ago, and who followed closely the gradual advance made in newspaper standards.

An important contribution of the Kansas Code outside of the state has been the stimulating of other state associations and organizations to adopt codes which are beneficial, to say the